REMARKS

The invention as defined in the new claims 28 – 39 is now clearly distiquished over the prior art, particularly US 5,746,989 (Murashi et al.) and US 6,293,096 (Khair et al) which are considered to represent the closest state of the art. They are distinct by the feature that the temperature of the exhaust gas is increased for the sulfur regeneration of the nitrogen oxide storage device to a greater degree than for the soot regeneration of the particle filter (see p. 2, line 30 – page 3 line 10 and page 9, lines13 – 28).

Neither US 5,746,989 nor US 6,293,086 provides any hint for a temperature correlation between the particle filter and the nitrogen oxide storage device during the regeneration procedure. Furthermore, no hint can be derived from US 6,293,096 concerning a sulfur regeneration at a raised exhaust gas temperature. And in particular no hint is available from the cited references regarding combined sulfur and soot regeneration phases. Although sulfur and soot regenerations are known per se, from US 5,746,989, in this particular reference the NO_x storage device is arranged downstream of the particle filter so that even a combination of the two documents can not lead to the method as defined in new claim 28.

It is believed that the new claims 28 -39 clearly distinguish the method according to the invention over the cited prior art.

Respectfully submitted,

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